

That thilke wombe in which youre children leye  
Sholde, biſorm the peple, in my walkyng,  
Be ſeyn at bare; wherfore I yow preye,  
Lat me nat lyk a worm go by the weye:  
Remembre yow, myn owene lord ſo deere,  
I was youre wyf, though I unworthy weere.

Wherfore, in guerdon of my maydenhede,  
Which that I broghte, and noght agayn I bere,  
As voucheth ſauf to yeve me, to my meede,  
But swich a ſmok as I was wont to were,  
That I therwith may wrye the wombe of here  
That was youre wyf; and heer take I my leue  
Of yow, myn owene lord, leſt I yow greve.

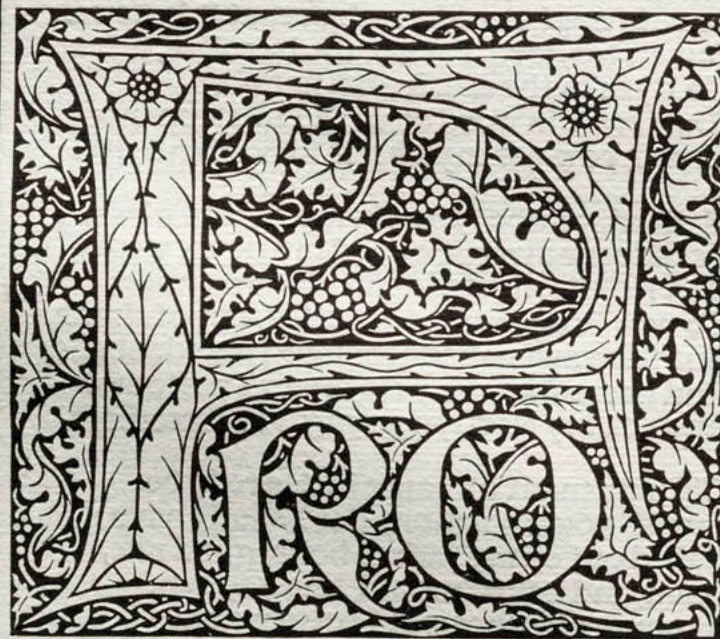
**T**HE ſmok, quod he, that thou haſt on  
thy bak,  
Lat it be ſtille, and bere it forth with  
thee.

But wel unnethes thilke word he ſpak,  
But wente his wey for routhe and for pitee.  
Biſorm the folk hiſelſen ſtrepeþ ſhe,  
And in hir ſmok, with heed and foot al bare,  
Toward hir fader hous forth iſ ſhe fare.

**T**HE folk hire folwe wepyng in hir weye,  
And fortune ay they curſen as they  
goon;

But ſhe fro wepyng kepte hire eyen dreye,  
Ne in this tyme word ne ſpak ſhe noon.  
Hir fader, that this tidyinge herde anon,  
Curſeth the day and tyme that nature  
Shoop hym to been a lyves creature.

for out of doute this olde povre man  
Was evere in ſuſpect of hir mariage;  
for evere he demed, ſith that it bigan,  
That whan the lord fulfild hadde his corage,



**PROLOGE**  
BOLOIGNE IS THIS ERL OF PANYK  
COME,  
Of which the fame up ſprang to moore and  
leſſe,  
And in the peples eres alle and ſome

Hym wolde thynke it were a diſparage  
To his eſtaat ſo lowe for talighte,  
And voyden hire as ſoone as ever he myghte.

**A**GAYNS his doghter haſtiliche goth he  
comyinge,

And with hire olde coote, as it myghte be,  
He covered hire, ful ſorwefully wepyng;  
But on hire body myghte he it nat bryng,  
for rude was the clooth, and moore of age  
By dayes fele than at hire mariage.

Thus with hire fader, for a certeyn ſpace,  
Dwelleteþ this flour of wyfly paciẽce,  
That neither by hire wordes ne hire face  
Biſorm the folk, ne eek in hire abſence,  
Ne ſhewed ſhe that hire was doon offence;  
Ne of hire heighe eſtaat no remembraunce  
Ne hadde ſhe, as by hire contaunce.

No wonder iſ, for in hire grete eſtaat  
Hire goost was evere in pleyȝ humylitee;  
No tendre mouth, noon herte delicate,  
No pompe, no ſemblant of roialtee;  
But ful of pacient benygnytee,  
Diſcreet and pricleeſ, ay honourable,  
And to hire housbonde evere meke & ſtable.

Men ſpeke of Job, and moost for his hum-  
bleſſe,  
As clerkes, whan hem liſt, konne wel endite,  
Namely of men, but as in ſoothfaſtneſſe,  
Though clerkes preiſe wommen but a lite,  
Ther kan no man in humbleſſe hym acquite  
As womman kan, ne kan been half ſo trewe  
As wommen been, but it be falle of newe.

**Explicit quinta pars. Sequitur pars sexta.**

Was kouth eek, that a newe markyſſeſſe  
He with hym broghte, in swich pompe and  
richeſſe,  
That nevere was ther ſeyn with mannes eye  
So noble array in al Weſt Lumbardye.

The markyſ, which that shoop and knew al  
this,  
Er that this erl was come, ſente hiſ meſſage  
for thilke ſely povre Grisildis;  
And ſhe with humble herte and glad viſage,  
Nat with no ſwollen thought in hire corage,  
Cam at hiſ heſte, and on hire knees hire  
ſette,  
And reverently and wiſely ſhe hym grette.

**G**RISILDE, quod he, my wyt iſ outrely  
This mayden that ſhal wedded been  
to me,  
Received be tomorwe as roially  
As it poſſible iſ in myn hous to be.  
And eek that every wight in hiſ degree  
Have hiſ eſtaat in ſittyng and ſervyſe  
And heigh pleaſaunce, as I kan beſt devyſe.



I have no wommen ſuffiſaunt certayn  
The chambres for tarraye in ordinaunce  
After my luſt, and therefore wolde I fayn  
That thyn were al swich manere governaunce;  
Thou knoweſt eek of old al my pleaſaunce;  
Thogh thyn array be badde and yvel biſeye,  
Do thou thy devoir at the leeste weye.

**N**AT oonly, lord, that I am glad, quod ſhe,  
To doon youre luſt, but I deſire alſo  
Yow for to ſerve and pleſe in my degree  
Withouthen feynting, and ſhal everemo;  
Ne nevere, for no wele ne no wo,  
Ne ſhal the goost withinne myn herte ſtente  
To love yow beſt with al my trewe entente.

And with that word ſhe gan the hous to  
dighte,  
And tables for to ſette and beddes make;  
And peyned hire to doon al that ſhe myghte,  
Prepyng the chambereres for Goddes ſake  
To haſten hem, and faſte ſwepe and ſhake;  
And ſhe, the mooste ſervyſable of alle,  
Hath every chambre arrayed and hiſ halle.

**B**OTTEN undren gan this erl alighte,  
That with him broghte thiſe noble  
children tweye,  
for which the peple ran to ſeen the ſighte

Of hire array, ſo richely biſeye;  
And thanne at erſt amonges hem they ſeye,  
That Walter was no fool, thogh that hym leſte  
To chaunge hiſ wyf, for it was for the beſte.

for ſhe iſ fairer, as they deemen alle,  
Than iſ Grisilde, and moore tendre of age,  
And fairer fruyt bitwene hem ſholde falle,  
And moore pleaſant, for hire heigh lynage;  
Hir brother eek ſo faire was of viſage,  
That hem to ſeen the peple hath caught  
pleſaunce,  
Commendyinge now the markyſs governaunce.

**Auctor**

**S**TORMY peple! unſad and  
evere untrewel!  
Ay un-diſcreet and chaungyng  
as a vane,  
Delityng evere in rumbul that  
iſ newe,

for lyk the moone ay wexe ye and wane;  
Ay ful of clappyng, deere ynogh a jane;  
Youre doom iſ falſ, youre conſtance yvele  
preeveth,  
A ful greet fool iſ he that on yow leeveth!

Thus ſeyden ſadde folk in that citee  
Whan that the peple gazed up and down,